Soc of Inquiry on Missions Princeton N Jersey

27 July 8, 1837

Dear brethren

With pleasure do I hasten to the immediate performance of a duty enjoined upon me by the Soc which I represent. We have heard by ~~some~~ individual who is a member of your Soc or who has seen one of your members that you have written two letters to us without having received any answers. By an examination the Book we find that one has been received and was read in Soc on the first of last Sept. The attending members have nearly all been initiated since that time and did not know untill a few days since that we had ever held a correspondance with you. We do with pleasure renew the correspondence believing it will be at least a source of interest if not of improvement. To high an estimation has not neither indeed do I think will be formed of Societies of Inquiry in Literary Institutions. Such is the influence of our studies and society generally that the salvation of Souls will be little contemplated and even the concert may be entirely neglected unless there is some Religious Associations to awaken an interest. We consider that our Soc has been a source of much advantage to us. The nature of our question is such as is calculated to lead to a free expression of our religious feelings which has a tendency to raise the spirit of piety which is so very desirable. I trust also that some of us have caught a missionary spirit as we have been lead during debates and the reading of essays to view in imagination the devotees of superstition kneeling before their altars sacrificing their offspring to reptiles, and throwing themselves before the cars of Juggernaut. Some of us when we have contrasted our condition with theirs our knowledge with their ignorance our privileges with their entire destitution our happiness with their misery and especially our prospects for futurity with theirs, have wished that we were in the very midst of them that we might tell them the story of the cross and lead them in the true road to happiness. Yet we feel little when compared with what we ough to. Almost all say there is enough for them to do here. We who have never witnessed a sabbath upon which we were not summoned by the Church bell ho the Sanctuary know not how to sympathise with the Heathen, The pleasures of intelligent christian society have bound us with strong and endearing ties to our home and that we are not willing to sever them and say I will go as my Saviour went where I shall not have a place to repose for the redemption of my race, We are quite to indifferent, Would that the youth of our country were duly impressed with their personal responsibility for the improvement of their matchless mercies and their obligation to the destitute; Then the Macedonian cry would not fall so helpless upon our ears While we feel a deep solicitude for the foreign heathen and are anxious to teach them the word of life we would not entirely neglect the destitute in our own country, The Indian we have driven from the Atlantic shores at the point of the bayonet and when they have halted we have driven them from their resting place as if to leave only their history to posterity, What few remain are destitute of the word of life, Our western States are being settled with emigrants from every part of the globe and are ere long to be the ~~[illegible]~~ heart of our country And even now the enemy to all righteous is sowing the seed of distruction which unlefs counteracted by its only formadable foe Religious truth will grow and will ere long produce a harvest which will be connected into chords to bind and draw us to the stake to be burned as heritick, The principle of the Religion of Christ can root out ~~and~~ the seed and dispell the thick fog of prejudice and superstition which surrounds them as the rays of the Sun dispells the mist of morning, The colored population of the South is the last but not necessarily least object of x which I shall mention in our sympathy x, They are as degraded as the Burmahs, We have brought them here and had the profits of their labour and unlefs we can prove that they have no souls nor feelings I say we ought immediately to give them liberty and the Gospel, When we contemplate the moral ~~de~~ condition of the people to which I ~~[illegible]~~ have refered we ought to say Lord send us where thou wilt, God work by human means, and whence are the means to be obtained to make all these deserts blossom like the rose, Brethren I need not to tell you that it is from our literary and theological institutions, But are there sufficient in them? There one hundred in this institution professedly the followers of Christ and there are many more in yours and then collect the hundreds in other parts of the country and we have an army of young educated men led not by Xerxes nor Alex but by Christ the ruler of rulers, But do you think all these insufficient? Then let you and I speak to our associates and let them exert their influence upon others and we will have very soon an innumerable host, But suppose we do not have an army like that of Xerxes innumerable; there is no necessity of our fearing to go to battle ourselves, Let us take courage from the example of Gideons army and know and act accordingly that when Christ is at our head the battle is not always to the strong, If we would be instrumental of adding glory to God in the salvation of souls we must awake from the [illegible] lethargy into which we who are members of Union College have fallen and if the members of the Theological Seminary at Princeton have awoke who are now enjoying the twilight of the Gospel ministry we shall expect to hear and see very soon the fruits of their being ar[illegible] fro[illegible] slumbers, If we would do good we must exert ev[illegible] faculty of our soul in the work. It pleased the Lord to pour out his spirit upon our city in the fore part of the season when about two hundred were hopefully converted yet we should not The present state of religion is very low; Brethren we ask an interest in your prayers that we may enjoy even if nothing else the favour of God and that you may be blessed of God and be lasting blessing to the world and at last be brought home to God is the prayer of the members of the soc of Inquiry on Missions in Union College,

I am yours &c

H Rice Dunham

Corresponding Sec

July 10. 1837

18¾

Society of Inquiry Theological Seminary
Princeton
N Jersey

Answered.

Ansd Jan. 28. 1839